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# "Miss Civilization"

Richard Harding Davis

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# "MISS CIVILIZATION"

# "MISS CIVILIZATION"

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# "MISS CIVILIZATION"

## A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK :::::::::::::::::: 1905

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TROW DIRECTORY
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

## PEOPLE IN THE PLAY

ALICE GARDNER, *daughter of James K. Gardner, President of the L. I. & W. Railroad*

"UNCLE" JOSEPH HATCH, *alias "Gentleman Joe"*

"BRICK" MEAKIN, *alias "Reddy, the Kid"*

HARRY HAYES, *alias "Grand Stand" Harry*

CAPTAIN LUCAS, *Chief of Police*

POLICEMEN, BRAKEMEN, ENGINEERS

# "MISS CIVILIZATION"

SCENE.—The dining-room in the country house of James K. Gardner on Long Island. In the back wall is a double doorway opening into a hall. A curtain divided in the middle hangs across the entrance. On the wall on either side of the doorway are two electric lights, and to the left is a telephone. Further to the left is a side-board. On it are set silver salvers, candlesticks, and Christmas presents of silver. They still are in the red flannel bags in which they arrived. In the left wall is a recessed window hung with curtains. Against the right wall is a buffet on which is set a tea caddy, toast rack, and tea kettle. Below the buffet a door opens into the butler's pantry. A dinner table stands well down the stage with a chair at each end and on either side. Two chairs are set against the back wall to the right of the door. The walls and windows are decorated with holly and mistletoe and Christmas wreaths tied with bows of scarlet ribbon. When the window is opened there is a view of falling snow. At first the room is in complete darkness.

The time is the day after Christmas, near midnight.

After the curtain rises one hears the noise of a file scraping on iron. It comes apparently from outside the house at

a point distant from the dining-room. The filing is repeated cautiously, with a wait between each stroke, as though the person using the file had paused to listen.

ALICE GARDNER enters at centre, carrying a lighted candle in a silver candlestick. She wears a dressing gown, with swan's-down around her throat and at the edges of her sleeves. Her feet are in bedroom slippers topped with fur. Her hair hangs down in a braid. After listening intently to the sound of the file, she places candle on sideboard and goes to telephone. She speaks in a whisper.

ALICE

Hello, Central. Hello, Central. (*Impatiently.*) Wake up! Wake up! Is that you, Central? Give me the station agent at Bedford Junction—quick. What? I *can't* speak louder. Well, you *must* hear me. Give me the station agent at Bedford Junction. No, there's always a man there all night. Hurry, please, hurry. (*There is a pause, during which the sound of the file grows louder.* ALICE *listens apprehensively.*) Hello, are you the station agent? Good! Listen! I am Miss Gardner, James K. Gardner's daughter. Yes, James K. Gardner, the president of the road. This is his

house. My mother and I are here alone. There are three men trying to break in. Yes, burglars, of course. My mother is very ill. If they frighten her the shock might—might be very serious. Wake up the crew, and send the wrecking train here—at once. Send—the—crew—of—the—wrecking train here—quick. What? Then fire up an engine and get it here as fast as you can.

VOICE (*calling from second story*)

Alice!

ALICE (*at telephone*)

Yes, you have. The up-track's clear until "52" comes along. That's not until——

VOICE (*louder*)

Alice!

ALICE (*with dismay*)

Mother! (*At telephone.*) Hello, hold the wire. Don't go away! (*Runs to curtains, parts them, and looks up as though speaking to some one at top of stairs.*) Mother, why *aren't* you in bed?

VOICE

Is anything wrong, Alice?

ALICE

No, dear, no. I just came down to—get a book I forgot. Please go back, dearest.

VOICE

I heard you moving about, I thought you might be ill.

ALICE

No, dearest, but *you'll* be very ill if you don't keep in bed. Please, mother—at once. It's all right, it's all right.

VOICE

Yes, dear. Good-night.

ALICE

Good-night, mother. (*Returns quickly to telephone.*) Hello! Hello! Stop the engine at the foot of our lawn. Yes, yes, at the foot of our lawn. And when you have the house surrounded, when the men are all around the

house, blow three whistles so I'll know you're here. What? Oh, that's all right. The burglars will be here. *I'll* see to that. All *you* have to do is to *get* here. If you don't, you'll lose your job! I say, if you don't, you'll lose your job, or I'm not the daughter of the president of this road. *Now, you jump!* And—wait—hello— (*Turns from telephone.*) He's jumped.

(The file is now drawn harshly across the bolt of the window of the dining-room, and a piece of wood snaps. With an exclamation, ALICE blows out the candle and exits. The shutters of the windows are opened, admitting the faint glow of moonlight. The window is raised and the ray of a dark lantern is swept about the room. HATCH appears at window and puts one leg inside. He is an elderly man wearing a mask which hides the upper half of his face, a heavy overcoat and a derby hat. But for the mask he might be mistaken for a respectable man of business. A pane of glass falls from the window and breaks on the sill.)

HATCH (*speaking over his shoulder*)

Hush! Be careful, can't you. (*He enters. He is followed by* "GRAND STAND" HARRY, *a younger man of sporting appearance. He also*

*wears a mask, and the brim of his gray Alpine hat is pulled over his eyes. Around his throat he wears a heavy silk muffler.*) It's all right. Come on. Hurry up, and close those shutters.

HARRY (*to* REDDY *outside*)

Give me the bag, Reddy. (REDDY *appears at window. He is dressed like a Bowery tough. His face is blackened with burnt cork. His hair is of a brilliant red. He wears an engineer's silk cap with vizor. To* HARRY *he passes a half-filled canvas bag. On his shoulder he carries another. On entering he slips and falls forward on the floor.*)

HATCH

Confound you!

HARRY

Hush, you fool.

HATCH

Has he broken anything?

REDDY (*on floor, rubbing his head*)

I've broke my head.

HATCH

That's no loss. Has he smashed that silver?

HARRY (*feeling in bag*)

It feels all right. (HATCH *cautiously parts curtains at centre and exits into hall.*)

REDDY (*lifts bag*)

We got enough stuff in this bag already without wasting time on *another* house.

HARRY

Wasting time! Time's money in *this* house. Look at this silver. That's the beauty of working the night *after* Christmas; everybody's presents is lying about loose, and everybody's too tired celebrating to keep awake. (*Lifts silver loving cup.*) Look at that cup!

REDDY

I'd rather look at a cup of coffee.

HARRY (*contemptuously*)

Ah, you!

REDDY

Well, I can't make a meal out of silver ice pitchers, can I? I've been through three refrigerators to-night, and nothing in any of 'em but bottles of *milk! Milk!*

HARRY

Get up, get up, get to work.

REDDY

The folks in this town are the stingiest I ever see. *I* won't visit 'em again, no matter how often they ask me. (*Rising and crossing to buffet.*) I wonder if these folks is vegetarians, too. (HATCH *enters.*)

HATCH

It seems all right. There's no light, and everybody's quiet. (*To* HARRY.) You work the bedrooms. I'll clear away those things. Don't be rough, now.

HARRY

I know my business. Give me the light. (*Takes lantern and exits centre.*)

HATCH

Hist, Reddy. Reddy, leave that alone. That's not a safe. (*Removes silver from sideboard to bag.*)

REDDY

I know it ain't, governor. I'm lookin' for somethin' to eat. (*He kneels in front of buffet, and opens door.*)

HATCH

No, you're not! You're not here to eat. Come and give me a hand with this stuff.

REDDY

Gee! I've found a bottle of whiskey. (*Takes bottle from buffet and begins to pull at the cork.*)

HATCH

Well, you put it right back where you found it.

REDDY

I know a better place than that to put it.

HATCH

How many times have I told you I'll not let you drink in business hours?

REDDY

Oh, just once, governor; it's a cruel, cold night. (*Coughs.*) I need it for medicine.

HATCH

No, I tell you!

REDDY

Just *one* dose. Here's to you. (*Drinks.*) Oh, Lord! (*He sputters and coughs violently.*)

HATCH (*starts toward him*)

Hush! Stop that, you fool.

REDDY

Oh, I'm poisoned! That's benzine, governor. What do you think of that? Benzine! It's burned me throat out.

HATCH

I wish it had burned your tongue out! *Can't* you keep still?

REDDY

Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! Think of a man puttin' benzine in a whiskey bottle! That's dishonest, that is. Using a revenue stamp twice is defraudin' the Government. I could have him arrested for that. (*Pause.*) If I wanted to. (*Pause.*) But I don't want to.

HATCH

Oh, quit that—and come here. Get out the window, and I'll hand the bag to you. Put it under the seat of the wagon, and cover it up with the lap robe. (REDDY *steps to centre door and, parting the curtains, leans into the hall beyond, listening.*)

REDDY

Go slow. I ain't to leave here till Harry is safe on the ground floor again.

HATCH

Don't you worry about Harry. He won't get into trouble.

REDDY

Sure *he* won't. It's *me* and *you* he'll get into trouble. You hadn't ought to send *him* to do second-story work.

HATCH (*contemptuously*)

No?

REDDY

No; he's too tender-hearted. A second-story worker ought to use his gun.

HATCH

Oh, you! You'll fire your gun too often some day.

REDDY

No, I won't. I did once, but I didn't do it again for six years. But Harry—ah, he's too tender-hearted. If Harry was a chicken thief, before he'd wring a chicken's neck he'd give it laughing gas. Why, you remember the lady that woke up and begged him to give her back a gold watch because it belonged to her little girl who was dead. Well—it turned out the

little girl wasn't dead. It turned out the little girl was a big boy, alive and kicking—especially kicking. He kicked me into a rosebush.

HATCH

That'll do. Harry's learning his trade. He'll pick it up in time.

REDDY

About time he picked up something. Remember the Gainesville Bank; where he went away leaving ten thousand dollars in the back of the safe. Why didn't he pick *that* up?

HATCH

Because it wasn't there. Bank directors always say that—to make us feel bad. Hush! (HARRY *enters, carrying his silk muffler, which now is wrapped about a collection of jewels and watches.*)

HATCH

That's quick work. What did you get?

HARRY

Some neck strings, and rings, and two

watches. (*He spreads the muffler on the table. The three men examine the jewelry.*)

HATCH

That looks good. Who's up there?

HARRY

Only an old lady and a young girl in the room over this. And she's a beauty, too. (*Sentimentally.*) Sleeping there just as sweet and peaceful—

REDDY

Ah, why don't you give her back *her* watch? Maybe she's *another* dead daughter.

HATCH

That's all right, Harry. That's good stuff. Pick up that bag, Reddy. We can go now. (HARRY *places muffler and jewels in an inside coat pocket.* REDDY *takes up the dark lantern.*)

REDDY

Go? Not till I've got something to eat.

HATCH

No, you don't. You can wait till later for something to eat.

REDDY

Yes, I can wait till later for something to eat, but I can wait better if I eat now. (*Exit into pantry.*)

HATCH

Confound him. If I knew the roads around here as well as he does, I'd drive off and leave him. That appetite of his will send us to jail some day.

HARRY

Well, to tell the truth, governor, a little supper wouldn't hurt my feelings. (*Goes to buffet.*) I wonder where old man Gardner keeps his Havanas? I'd like a Christmas present of a box of cigars. Are there any over here?

HATCH

I didn't look. I gave up robbing tills when I was quite a boy. (*Carries bag toward window and looks out.*)

HARRY (*takes box of cigars from buffet*)

Ah, here they are. (*With disgust.*) Domestics! What do you think of that? Made in Vermont. The "Admiral Dewey" cigar. Gee! What was the use of Dewey's taking Manila, if I've got to smoke Vermont cigars? (REDDY *enters, carrying tray with food and a bottle.*)

REDDY

Say, fellers, look at this layout. These is real people in this house. I found cold birds, and ham, and all kinds of pie, and real wine. (*Places tray on right end of table.*) Sit down, and make yourselves perfectly at home.

HARRY

Well, well, that does look good. (*Places box of cigars at upper end of table, and seats himself.*) Better have a bite, governor.

HATCH

No, I tell you. (*He sits angrily in chair at left end of table, with his face turned toward the curtains.*)

REDDY

Oh, come on. It don't cost *you* nothing. (*The light from the candle is seen approaching the curtains.*)

HATCH

Hush! Look there! (*He rises, lifting his chair above his head, and advances on tiptoe to right of curtains, where he stands with the chair raised as though to strike.* HARRY *points revolver at curtains.* REDDY *shifts the lantern to his left hand and, standing close to* HARRY, *also points a revolver.* ALICE *appears between curtains. She is dressed as before, and in her left hand carries the candle, while the forefinger of her right hand is held warningly to her lips. For an instant she pauses, in the ring of light from the lantern.*)

ALICE (*whispering*)

Hush! Don't make a noise. Don't make a noise, please. (*There is a long pause.*)

REDDY

Well, I'll be hung!

ALICE (*to* REDDY)

Please don't make a noise.

HATCH (*in a threatening whisper*)

Don't *you* make a noise.

ALICE

I don't mean to. My mother is asleep upstairs and she is very ill. And I don't want to wake her—and I don't want you to wake her, either.

REDDY

Well, I'll be hung!

HATCH (*angrily*)

Who else is in this house?

ALICE

No one but mother and the maid-servants, and they're asleep. You woke me, and I hoped you'd go without disturbing mother. But when you started in making a night of it, I decided I'd better come down and ask you to be as quiet as possible. My mother is not at all well.

(*Takes cigar box off table.*) Excuse me; you've got the wrong cigars. Those are the cigars father keeps for his friends. Those he smokes he hides over here. (*Places box on buffet and takes out a larger box, with partitions for cigars, matches and cigarettes. As she moves about,* REDDY *keeps her well in the light of the lantern.*) Try those. I'm afraid you've a very poor supper. When father is away, we have such a small family. I can't see what you've— Would you mind taking that light out of my eyes, and pointing it at that tray?

HATCH (*sharply*)

Don't you do it. Keep the gun on her.

ALICE

Oh, I don't mind his pointing the gun at me, so long as he does not point that light at me. It's most—embarrassing. (*Sternly.*) Turn it down there, please. (REDDY *lets light fall on tray.*) Why, that's *cooking* sherry you've got. You can't drink *that!* Let me get you some whiskey.

REDDY (*covering her with lantern*)

No, you don't. That's not whiskey. It's benzine.

ALICE

You don't mean to say that that benzine bottle is there *still?* I told Jane to take it away.

REDDY (*dryly*)

Well, Jane didn't do it.

ALICE

Now, isn't that just like Jane? I told her it might set fire to the house and burn us alive.

REDDY

It nearly burned me alive.

ALICE

I'm so sorry. (*Takes from buffet a tray holding whiskey bottle, siphon, and three glasses.*) Here, this is what you want. But, perhaps, you don't like Scotch.

HATCH

Don't you touch that, Reddy. (*Returns to chair at left of table.*)

REDDY

Why not?

ALICE (*pours whiskey into a glass*)

Yes; why not? It's not poison. There's nothing wrong with this bottle. If you're afraid, I'll prove it to you. Just to show you there's not a trace of hard feelings. (*Drinks and coughs violently.*)

REDDY (*sympathetically*)

*She's* got the benzine bottle, too.

ALICE

No. I'm not quite used to that. (*To* HARRY.) Excuse me, but aren't you getting tired holding that big pistol? Don't you think you might put it down now, and help me serve this supper? (HARRY *does not move.*) No? Well, then, let the colored gentleman help me. (HARRY *and* REDDY *wheel sharply, each pointing his revolver.*)

REDDY

Colored man! Where?

HARRY

Colored man! It's a trap! (*Seeing no one, they turn.*)

ALICE (*to* REDDY)

Oh, pardon me. Aren't you a colored person?

REDDY

Me! Colored? You never see a colored man with hair like that, did you? (*Points lantern at his head.*) This isn't my real face, lady. Why, out of office hours, I've a complexion like cream and roses. (*Indignantly.*) Colored man!

ALICE

I beg your pardon, but I can't see very well. Don't you think it would be more cheerful if we had a little more light?

HATCH

No! (*To* REDDY.) Drop that. We've got to go. (*To* ALICE.) And before we go, I've got to fix you.

ALICE

Fix me—how "fix" me?

HATCH

I'm sorry, miss, but it's your own fault. You shouldn't have tried to see us. Now that you *have,* before we leave, I've got to tie you to a chair—and gag you.

ALICE

Oh, really—all of that?

HATCH

I can't have you raising the neighborhood until we get well away.

ALICE

I see. But—gagged—I'll look so foolish.

REDDY

Well, there's no hurry. We won't get well away until I've had something to eat.

ALICE

Quite right. (*To* HATCH.) You can tie me in a chair later, Mr. ——. But now you

must remember that I am your hostess. (*To* REDDY.) You'll find plates in the pantry, please.

REDDY

Oh, I don't use them things.

ALICE

You'll use " them things " when you eat with me. Go, do as I tell you, please. (REDDY *exits.*) And you—put away that silly gun and help him.

HATCH

Stay where you are.

HARRY

Oh, what's the rush, governor? She can't hurt nobody. And I'm near starved, too. (*Exit into pantry.*)

HATCH

This is the last time I take *you* out.

ALICE (*arranging the food upon the table*)

Now, why are you so peevish to everybody? Why don't you be sociable, and take some sup-

per? (*Glances at sideboard.*) You seem to have taken everything else. Oh, that reminds me. Would you object to loaning me about—four, six—about six of our knives and forks? Just for this supper. I suppose we can borrow from the neighbors for breakfast. Unless you've been calling on the neighbors, too.

HATCH

Oh, anything to oblige a lady. (*Threateningly.*) But no tricks, now!

ALICE

Oh, I can't promise that, because I mightn't be able to keep my promise. (HATCH *brings silver knives and forks from the bag.*)

HATCH

I'll risk all the tricks you know. Nobody's got much the better of me in the last twenty years.

ALICE

Have you been a burglar twenty years? You must have begun very young. I can't see your

face very well, but I shouldn't say you were—over forty. Do take that mask off. It looks so—unsociable. Don't be afraid of me. I've a perfectly shocking memory for faces. Now, I'm sure that under that unbecoming and terrifying exterior you are hiding a kind and fatherly countenance. Am I right? (*Laughs.*) Why do you wear it?

HATCH (*roughly*)

To keep my face warm.

ALICE

Oh, pardon me; my mistake. (*A locomotive whistle is heard at a distance.* ALICE *listens eagerly. As the whistle dies away and is not repeated, her face shows her disappointment.*)

HATCH

What was that? There's no trains this time of night.

ALICE (*speaking partly to herself*)

It was a freight train, going the other way.

HATCH (*suspiciously*)

The other way? The other way from where?

ALICE

From where it started. Do you know, I've always wanted to meet a burglar. But it's so difficult. They go out so seldom.

HATCH

Yes; and they arrive so late.

ALICE (*laughing*)

Now, that's much better. It's so nice of you to have a sense of humor. While you're there, just close those blinds, please, so that the neighbors can't see what scandalous hours we keep. And then you can make a light. This is much too gloomy for a supper party.

HATCH (*closing shutters*)

Yes; if those were shut it might be safer. (*He closes shutters and turns on the two electric lights.* REDDY *and* HARRY *enter, carrying plates.*)

HARRY

We aren't regular waiters, miss, but we think we're pretty good for amateurs.

REDDY

We haven't forgot nothing. Not even napkins. Have some napkins? (*Places a pile of folded napkins in front of* ALICE. *Then sits at head of table,* HARRY *to lower right of table.* ALICE *moves her chair away from the table, but keeping* REDDY *on her right.* HATCH *sits still further away from the table on her left.*)

ALICE

Thanks. Put the plates down there. And may I help you to some——

REDDY (*taking food in fingers*)

Oh, we'll help ourselves.

ALICE

Of course you're accustomed to helping yourselves, aren't you? (*To* HATCH.) Won't you join them?

HATCH

No. (*Through the scene which follows,* REDDY *and* HARRY *continue to eat and drink heartily.*)

ALICE

No? Well, then, while they're having supper, you and I will talk. If you're going to gag me soon, I want to talk while I can. (*Rises and hands box to him.*) Have a cigar?

HATCH (*takes cigar*)

Thanks.

ALICE (*standing with hand on back of chair*)

Now, I want to ask you some questions. You are an intelligent man. Of course, you must be, or you couldn't have kept out of jail for twenty years. To get on in your business, a man must be intelligent, and he must have nerve, and courage. Now—with those qualities, why, may I ask—why are you so stupid as to be a burglar?

HARRY

Stupid!

REDDY

Well, I like that!

HATCH

Stupid? Why, I make a living at it.

ALICE

How much of a living?

HATCH

Ten thousand a year.

ALICE

Ten thousand—well, suppose you made *fifty* thousand. What good is even a hundred thousand for *one* year, if to get it you risk going to prison for twenty years? That's not sensible. Merely as a business proposition, to take the risk you do for ten thousand dollars is stupid, isn't it? I can understand a man's risking twenty years of his life for some things—a man like Peary or Dewey, or Santos-Dumont. They took big risks for big prizes. But there's thousands of men in this country, not half as clever as you are, earning ten thousand a year—with-

out any risk of going to jail. None of *them* is afraid to go out in public with his wife and children. *They're* not afraid to ask a policeman what time it is. They don't have to wear black masks, nor ruin their beautiful complexions with burnt cork.

REDDY

Ah, go on. Who'd give *me* a job?

ALICE

Whom did you ever ask for one?

REDDY (*to* HARRY)

Pass me some more of that pie like mother used to make.

HATCH

Yes; there are clerks and shopkeepers working behind a counter twenty-four hours a day, but they don't make ten thousand a year, and no one ever hears of *them*. There's no *fame* in their job.

ALICE

Fame! Oh, how interesting. Are you—a celebrity?

HATCH

I'm quite as well known as I care to be. Now, to-morrow, all the papers will be talking about this. There'll be columns about us three. No one will know we are the ones they're talking about——

REDDY

I hope not.

HATCH

But the men in our profession will know. And they'll say, "That was a neat job of So-and-so's last night." That's fame. Why, we've got a reputation from one end of this country to the other.

HARRY

That's right! There's some of us just as well known as—Mister—Santos—Dumont.

REDDY

And we fly just as high, too.

ALICE (*to* HATCH)

I suppose *you*—I suppose you're quite a *famous* burglar?

REDDY

Him? Why, he's as well known as Billy the Kid.

ALICE

Billy the Kid, really! He sounds *so* attractive. But I'm afraid—I don't think—that I ever heard of *him*.

REDDY

Never heard of Billy the Kid? What do you think of that?

HATCH

Well, then, I'm as well known as "Brace" Phillips, the Manhattan Bank robber.

REDDY

*Sure* he is.

HATCH

Don't tell me you never heard of him?

ALICE

I'm afraid not.

HATCH

Why, he's a head-liner. He's as well known as George Post. Coppy Farrell? Billy Porter?

ALICE

No. There you are. Now, you claim there is fame in this profession, and you have named five men who are at the top of it, and I've never heard of one of them. And I read the papers, too.

REDDY

Well, there's *other* ladies who have heard of us. Real ladies. When I was doing my last bit in jail, I got a thousand letters from ladies asking for me photograph, and offering to marry me.

ALICE

Really? Well, that only proves that men—*as husbands*—are more desirable in jail than out. (*To* HATCH.) No; it's a poor life.

HATCH

It's a poor life you people lead with us to worry you. There's seventy millions of you in the United States, and only a few of us, and yet we keep you guessing all the year round. Why, we're the last thing you think of at night when you lock the doors, we're the first thing you think of in the morning when you feel for the silver basket. We're just a few up against seventy millions. I tell you there's fame and big money and a free life in my business.

ALICE

Yes; it's a free life until you go to jail. It's this way. You're barbarians, and there's no place for you in a civilized community—except in jail. Everybody is working against you. Every city has its police force; almost every house nowadays has a private watchman. And if we want to raise a hue and cry after you, there are the newspapers, and the telegraph, and the telephone (*nods at telephone*) and the cables all over the——

HATCH (*grimly*)

Thank you. One moment, please. (*Throws open overcoat, showing that it is lined with burglars' jimmies, chisels, and augers.*)

ALICE

My! What an interesting coat. It looks like a tool chest. Just the coat for an automobile trip.

HATCH

Harry, cut those telephone wires. (*Hands barbed-wire cutter to* HARRY. *To* ALICE.) Thank you for reminding me.

ALICE

Oh, not at all. You've nothing to thank me for. (HARRY *goes to telephone. To* HARRY.) Don't make a noise doing that. Don't wake my mother. (*To* HATCH.) She's nervous, and she's ill, and if you wake her, or frighten her, I'll keep the police after you until every one of you is in jail.

HATCH

You won't keep after us very far when I've tied you up. Bring me those curtain cords, Harry.

ALICE

Oh, really, that's too ridiculous. (*Listens apprehensively.*)

HATCH

Sorry I had to bust up your still alarm, but after we go, we can't have you chatting with the police. If you hadn't so kindly given me a tip about the telephone, I might have gone off and clean forgot that. (HARRY *takes curtain cords from window curtains.*)

REDDY

I'm afraid pretty polly talked too much that time. We ain't all stupid.

ALICE

No; so I see, so I see. It was careless of me. But everybody you call upon may not be so careless.

HATCH

Well, I've won out for twenty years. I've never been in jail.

ALICE

Don't worry. You're young. I told you you looked young. Your time is coming. In these days there's no room for burglars. You belong to the days of stage coaches. You're old-fashioned now. You're trying to fight civilization, that's what you're trying to do. You may keep ahead for a time, but in a long race I'll back civilization to win.

HATCH

Is that so? Well, Miss Civilization, you've had your say, and I hope you feel better. (*To* HARRY.) Give me that silk muffler of yours. (*To* ALICE.) If civilization is going to help you, it's got to hurry.

ALICE

You don't mean to say you really are going to gag me?

HATCH

I am.

ALICE

My! But I shall look silly. (*With her face turned right she listens apprehensively.*)

HARRY (*coming down with curtain cords, and taking muffler from his pocket*)

I've got the stuff in this muffler.

HATCH

Well, give me that, too. (*Shows inside coat pocket.*) I'll put it in the safe. (HARRY *places muffler on table, exposing jewelry.* HATCH *begins placing the ornaments one at a time in his pocket. To* ALICE.) What is it? What did you hear?

ALICE

I—I thought I heard my mother moving about.

HATCH

Well, she'd better not move about.

ALICE (*fiercely*)

You'd better not wake her. (*Sees the jewels.*) Oh! Look at the "graft," or is it "swag"? Which is it?

HATCH (*to* HARRY)

Cover 'em up; cover it up. (HARRY *tries to hide the jewels with one hand, while he passes a lady's watch to* HATCH.)

HARRY (*to* ALICE)

That's *your* watch. I'm sorry it has to go.

ALICE

I'm not. It's the first time it ever did go. And, oh, thank you for taking that big brooch. It's a gift of father's, so I had to wear it, but it's so unbecoming. (*She listens covertly.*)

HATCH

Put your hat on them. Cover them up. (HARRY *partly covers jewels with his hat.* HATCH *lifts a diamond necklace.*)

ALICE

I suppose you know your own business—but *that is paste.*

HATCH

Do you want to be gagged *now?*

ALICE

Pardon me, of course you know what you want. (*Notices another necklace.*) Oh, that's Mrs. Warren's necklace! So you called on her, too, did you? Isn't she attractive!

REDDY

We didn't ask for the lady of the house. They ain't always as sociable as you are.

ALICE

Well, that's her necklace. You got that at the house on the hill with the red roof—the house has the red roof, not the hill. (*She recognizes, with an exclamation, a gold locket and chain which* HATCH *is about to place in his pocket.*) Oh! that's Mrs. Lowell's locket!

How could you! (*She snatches locket from* HATCH, *and clasps it in both hands. She rises indignantly.*) How dared you take that!

HATCH

Put that down!

ALICE (*wildly and rapidly*)

No; I will not. Do you know what that means to that woman? She cares more for that than for anything in this world. Her husband used to wear this. (*Points.*) That's a lock of their child's hair. The child's dead, and the husband's dead, and that's all she has left of either of them. And you *took* it, *you brutes!*

REDDY

Of course we took it. Why does she wear it where everybody can see it?

HATCH (*savagely*)

Keep quiet, you fool.

ALICE

She *wore* it? You took it—*from her?*

HATCH

We didn't hurt her. We only frightened her a bit. (*Angrily.*) And we'll frighten you before we're done with you, Miss Civilization!

ALICE (*defiantly, her voice rising*)

Frighten me! You—you with your faces covered! You're not men enough. You're afraid to even steal from men. You rob *women* when they're alone—at night. (*Holds up locket.*) Try to take that from me!

VOICE (*calling*)

Alice—Alice!

ALICE

Mother! Oh, I forgot, I forgot. (*The burglars rise and move toward her menacingly.*) Please, please keep quiet. For God's sake, don't —let—her—know!

VOICE

Alice, what's wrong? Who are you talking to? (ALICE *runs to the curtains, with one hand held out to the burglars, entreating silence.*)

ALICE

I'm—I'm talking to James, the coachman. One of the horses is ill. Don't come down, mother. Don't come down. Go back to bed. He's going now, right away. He came for some medicine. It's all right. Good-night, mother.

VOICE

Can't I help?

ALICE (*vehemently*)

No; no. Good-night, mother.

VOICE

Good-night.

HATCH (*fiercely, to* HARRY)

That's enough of this! We can't leave here with the whole house awake. And there's a coachman, too. She'll wake him next. He'll have the whole damned village after us. (*To* ALICE.) That woman upstairs and you have got to have your tongues stopped.

ALICE (*standing in front of curtains*)

You try to go near that woman! She's ill, she's feeble, she's my—mother! You dare to touch her.

HATCH

Get out of my way.

ALICE

She's ill, you cowards. It will kill her. You'll have to kill me before you get through this door.

HATCH (*savagely*)

Well, then, if it comes to that— (*Three locomotive whistles are heard from just outside the house.* ALICE *throws up her hands hysterically.*)

REDDY

Ah! At last! They've come. They've come!

HATCH (*fiercely*)

They've come! What is it? What does that mean? (REDDY *runs to window and opens the shutters.*)

ALICE (*jubilantly*)

It means—it means that twenty men are crossing that lawn. It means that while you sat drinking there, Civilization was racing toward you at seventy miles an hour!

HATCH

Damnation! We're trapped. Get to the wagon—quick! No. Leave the girl alone. We've no time for that. Drop that stuff. That way. That way.

REDDY (*at window*)

No. Get back! Get back! It's too late. There's hundreds of them out there.

HATCH (*running to centre door*)

Out here! This way! Quick!

ALICE (*mockingly*)

Yes; come! You don't dare come this way *now!* (*She drags open the curtains, disclosing* CAPTAIN LUCAS *and two other policemen. For an instant they stand, covering the burglars with*

*revolvers.* REDDY *runs to window. He is seized by an entering crowd of men in the oil-stained blue jeans of engineers and brakemen.*)

CAPTAIN LUCAS

Hold up your hands, all of you! I guess I know you. (*With his left hand he tears off* HATCH'S *mask.*) "Joe" Hatch—at last. (*Pulls off* HARRY'S *mask.*) And Harry Hayes. I thought so. And that's—the "Kid." The whole gang. (*To the police.*) Good work, boys. (*To* ALICE.) My congratulations, Miss Gardner. They're the worst lot in the country. You're a brave young lady. You ought——

ALICE (*speaking with an effort and swaying slightly*)

Hush, please. Don't—don't alarm my mother. Mother's not as strong as—as I am. (*Her eyes close, and she faints across the arm of the Chief of Police as the*

CURTAIN FALLS.

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